

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000083

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [PTER](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: PALESTINIANS BREAK THROUGH BORDER WITH EGYPT: TWO
EGYPTIAN POLICE DEAD, SCORES WOUNDED

Classified by DCM Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: GOE contacts from the Foreign Ministry and Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) confirmed that on the evening of January 4, a group of Palestinians allegedly from the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade broke through the security wall between Egypt and Gaza allowing nearly 1,000 Palestinians to enter Egypt. According to General Nagy of DMI, two Ministry of Interior (MOI) police were shot and killed, and four Border Guards and at least 60 police were injured during the incident. DMI sources estimate that approximately 75 Palestinians remain in custody in Rafah, but the rest of the Palestinians have returned to Gaza. DMI sources confirmed that Rafah and Karem Shalom border terminals have been operating normally on January 5. End summary.

12. (C) General Nagy of DMI and the Liaison Agency with International Agencies (LAWIO) said that the GOE received information early on January 4 suggesting the potential for violence on the border with Gaza. MOI police based in the nearby town of Al Arish were therefore, Nagy said, ready to deploy immediately when Palestinians allegedly from the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade used tractors stolen from the Rafah municipality to break through the cement barrier between Gaza and Egypt. DMI sources said the Al Aksa group was pressing for the release of Alaa Al Hams, imprisoned for his reported involvement in the kidnapping of a British national Kate Burton and her family on December 28.

13. (C) Nagy said that the Border Guard Forces arrived on the scene first, MOI police joined soon after. Two police were killed, four Border Guards and 30-60 police were injured when Palestinians fired shots from inside Gaza, Nagy said. MFA's Palestinian Affairs Office Director Randa Labib confirmed the reports on the number of police dead and wounded and estimated that at least 100 Palestinians are still in custody in Rafah. According to General Nagy, approximately 75 Palestinians remain in custody and under investigation in Rafah, but the rest of the Palestinians returned to Gaza.

14. (C) The Egyptians have told us that they have picked up most of the Palestinians -- mostly youths -- who crossed into Egypt. Of these, all but 75 (Egyptian General Intelligence Service reports 35) are being held for interrogation. The rest have returned to Gaza or been returned. We judge that not all the Palestinians were captured. Egyptians are at pains to downplay the significance of this incident. Nonetheless, it appears that the Egyptians responded swiftly and appropriately to the incursion.

15. (C) DMI contacts said that the Palestinian Authority has already closed the holes in the damaged wall and appear to be bolstering security in Gaza. General Nagy confirmed that border terminals at Rafah and Karem Shalom have been operating normally on January 5.

RICCIARDONE